

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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EXDIS

DEPT PASS TO SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: EAID, MASS, OVIP (ROBINSON, CHARLES W.), CG

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT MOBUTU'S REQUEST FOR US SUPPORT

SUMMARY: PRESIDENT MOBUTU IN MEETING WITH UNDERSECRETARY ROBINSON PICTURED ZAIRE AS SURROUNDED BY COMMUNIST-LEANING OR UNDEPENDABLE NEIGHBORS AND URGED USG TO ASSIST ZAIRE IN BECOMING "AN ISLAND OF PROSPERITY" AND MILITARILY SECURE. UNDERSECRETARY ROBINSON RESPONDED THAT USG WAS CONCERNED AS TO THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE MPLA TRIUMPH IN ANGOLA AND THE FUTURE EMPLOYMENT OF SOVIET-SUPPORTED CUBAN FORCES THERE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. HE EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT US WOULD GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO MOBUTU'S REQUESTS FOR ECONOMIC SUPPORT AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING PRE-BREAKFAST AND BREAKFAST DISCUSSION WITH MOBUTU, ROBINSON SAID HIS VISIT EXPRESSED THE CONTINUING SUPPORT OF PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY KISSINGER FOR ZAIRE AND APPRECIATION OF DIFFICULTIES COMPOUNDED BY MPLA SUCCESS IN ANGOLA.

2. MOBUTU DESCRIBED ZAIRE'S SITUATION AS INCREASINGLY SURROUNDED BY "RED" COUNTRIES--ANGOLA AND CABINDA, CONGO, TANZANIA AND THE VOLATILE UGANDA. HE FORESAW CONTINUED
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CUBAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, IMPLYING

FUTHER ACTION BEYOND ANGOLA. "THE FEAST IS VERY TEMPTING DOWN THERE," HE SAID.

3. ZAIRE'S STRATEGY MUST BE TO "TURN ZAIRE INTO AN ISLAND OF PROSPERITY," MOBUTU SAID. HE CITED EVIDENCE ALREADY REACHING HIM THAT ZAIRE POPULACE WAS INTERPRETING THE POSTPONEMENT OF FURTHER WORK ON THE SMTF COOPER PROJECT AS EVIDENCE THAT "AMERICANS ARE WALKING AWAY FROM ZAIRE"--DISREGARDING SUBSTANTIAL ROLES OF BRITISH, FRENCH, JAPANESE IN THIS PROJECT.

4. MOBUTU CALLED THE INTERDICTION OF BENGUELA RAILWAY THROUGH ANGOLA (SEVERAL MAJOR BRIDGES BLOWN) AS AIMED AT STRANGLING ZAIRE BECAUSE IT IS VITAL TO THE SHABA REGION WHICH IS THE SOURCE OF 70 PERCENT OF ZAIRE'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS AND 50 PERCENT OF ITS BUDGET REVENUES.

5. MOBUTU CALLED IN ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF TO PRESENT PROPOSED REVISIONS OF ROCKWELL REPORT ON MODERNIZATION OF ZAIRE ARMED FORCES. HE CITED AS AN EXAMPLE ZAIRE'S REQUEST FOR TANKS--EQUIPMENT WHICH ROCKWELL EARLIER DISMISSED AS IMPRACTICAL IN ZAIRE'S TERRAIN BUT WHICH SOVIET-ARMED MPLA AND CUBANS USED TO EXCELLENT ADVANTAGE ACCORDING TO MOBUTU. (ZAMISH WILL FORWARD ANALYSIS AND DETAILS TO DOD AND STATE).

6. MOBUTU URGED QUICK AND POSITIVE RESPONSE BY USG ON BOTH ECONOMIC AND MILITARY SUPPORT.

7. ROBINSON EXPRESSED HOPE THAT US CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDED TOWARD ASSITANCE TO ZAIRE WOULD BE MORE POSITIVE THAN AT TIME OF PROPOSALS TO SUPPORT COMPETING FACTIONS IN ANGOLA. HE SUGGESTED MULTIALTERAL GROUP APPROACH TO SUPPORT OF ZAIRE'S ECONOMIC STABILIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS, ALONG LINES OF PAST CONSULTATIVE GROUP. HE POINTED OUT THAT HE WAS GOING TO SHABA TODAY AS PART OF A STUDY OF WHAT MIGHT BE DONE TO RE-ESTABLISH SMTG COOPER PROJECTM HE EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT USG WOULD GIVE PROMPT, SRIIOUS CONSIDERATION TO SECURITY ASSITANCE REQUESTS BUT COULD NOT COMMENT ON AMOUNTS OR SPECIFICS.

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8. THROUGHTOUT MEETING, NO QUANTITIES OF EITHER ECONOMIC OR MILITARY ASSISTANCE WERE MENTIONED.
WALKER

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED TO SECRETARY.

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